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ABSTRACT

This report describes the New York City School Improvement Project, a program designed to help participating schools to improve their instructional effectiveness through school based planning groups that represent the schools' constituencies. The project design and procedures for determining the needs of individual schools are discussed, as are evaluation methods of the project's results. A case study report is presented that details various organizational factors that were found to be associated with student success in the elementary schools reporting data. These factors include: (1) strong administrative leadership; (2) instructional emphasis on basic skills; (3) a school climate conducive to learning; (4) high teacher expectations of student performance; and (5) ongoing assessment of student progress. (Author/GC)

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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"Without doubt, the matter of gravest and most pressing importance is the problem of student achievement...I am committed to demonstrable improvement in this area."

Frank Macchiarola, Chancellor
Mid-Year Report, January 1979

"We seek the means by which every public school in New York City can be made effective in teaching basic school skills to all children..We begin with the premise that all children are educable..."

Ronald Edmonds, Senior Assistant
to Chancellor for Instruction
Alan Blumner, Director (Acting)
Office of Educational Evaluation
School Improvement Project,
November 1978

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THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT OF THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I. Concept

Many New York City public schools, serving a variety of pupil populations, are demonstrating marked instructional success as measured by student performance on basic skills achievement tests. Several explanatory factors have been suggested for these successes. To validate these factors and identify other variables contributing to school success in New York City, a series of case studies was conducted in elementary schools in the Spring of 1979. Following this developmental activity, over the 1979-1980 school year, the School Improvement Project will assign a staff liaison to individual schools, at the school's request, to facilitate the creation and adoption of those educational practices and conditions believed to be most conducive to successful education in their particular school building.

II. Goal

The goal of the School Improvement Project is to help participating schools improve their instructional effectiveness for all students through school-based planning groups representing the schools' constituencies.

III. Need

An examination of the most recently published (1978) Board of Education data summarizing the basic skills performance of New York City's elementary school pupils in grades 2-6 shows a discouraging increase in the number of students falling two or more years below grade level in reading. By the sixth grade over twenty percent (21.5%) of students tested in that grade are two or more years below grade level in reading. These students move on to junior high school and high school continuing to fall further behind, too often becoming drop-outs or non-diploma graduates.

IV. Design

School Improvement Project activities will include: (1) the selection of schools seeking to increase the effectiveness of their overall educational plan; (2) an assessment of the schools' relative weaknesses and strengths; (3) the implementation of voluntary, school-based program planning which will facilitate flexible and innovative coordination of all available technical and supportive resources present within the school and available from community, district, business, non-profit, state, federal and Central Board sources; and (4) ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this implementation process, which will make possible timely program modification and revision as well as overall assessment of program success in raising basic skills achievement levels and effectiveness in other instructional areas.

V. Objectives

The overall objectives of the School Improvement Project are: (1) to identify those school practices and institutional characteristics that appear to be most related to educational success and are replicable in schools serving similar student populations; (2) to develop a series of data collection activities to be used in the analysis of administrative, curricular, and instructional dimensions of schools; (3) to develop a pool of alternative resources and strategies to facilitate and foster school improvement; (4) to formulate an improvement plan at each participating school through an agreement of representatives of all school constituencies; (5) to implement the activities and strategies outlined by the individual school improvement plan; and (6) to assess the success of the local school improvement plans and the impact of the School Improvement Project at participating schools.

VI. Activities

Pre-Implementation Activities (2/79 - 8/79)

Case studies have been conducted in nine New York City Board of Education elementary schools demonstrating improving, declining, and maintaining basic skills performance as indicated by an analysis of basic skills test data over the past four years. The purpose of the case studies was to examine the applicability of the Theory of School Effectiveness proposed by Mr. Ronald Edmonds (1977) to the New York City Public School System and to acquire additional knowledge regarding the practices and characteristics of selected schools. Among the factors investigated were administrative style, instructional emphasis on basic skills, school climate, teacher expectations, and ongoing assessment of pupil progress.

Case study data have been analyzed and the resulting information was used to revise the initial school assessment and data collection instruments for use in the schools participating in the Implementation Phase of the Project to begin in September 1979.

A. Key Premises

As proposed below, the School Improvement model is one which makes change agents/documentors (called "liaisons") available to the school to assist the staff and school community in their efforts to improve basic skills acquisition. Through its emphasis on documentation, it is a model which should itself be self-improving.

Implementation (7/79 - 6/80)

1. Approximately twenty New York City public elementary schools (K-6), representative of the city-wide public elementary school pupil population, will be selected to participate in the School Improvement Project. School selection will be based on criteria such as:
   - An expression of willingness to participate in the program by the school principal with the approval of the district superintendent.
   - Substantial agreement between the perceived needs of the school and the program activities proposed by the School Improvement Project.

- The absence of other formal school development programs operating within the school.

To further achieve a representative cross-section of schools, the sample of selected schools will evidence variability on the following school variables:

Size of student population (register)
Percent of low income student population
Ethnic break-down of student population
Movement in City-wide ranking based on basic skills achievement test scores.

The S.I.P. is designed to service all types of schools in a variety of settings. The inclusion of a representative cross-section of New York City schools will be achieved by selecting schools in as many different community school districts as possible. Based on applications, four of the city's five boroughs will be represented in the selection of participating Project schools.

The selection of participating non-public schools will follow the same general process as outlined for the selection of New York City Board of Education public schools. The Chief Administrator of S.I.P. will communicate with the administrators of the New York City non-public schools in order to agree upon an appropriate role in the S.I.P. One School Liaison will be assigned to the non-public school component.

2. An advisory review panel will be established to act in a consultative capacity to School Improvement staff. The panel will be a small working group composed of representatives from organizations and groups directly involved or impacted upon by the Project. Initially the following organizations will be represented:

   Council of Supervisors and Administrators
   New York City Association of Superintendents
   New York City School Boards Association
   Public Education Association
   United Federation of Teachers
   United Parents Association

3. School Improvement Liaisons will be assigned to each of the approximately twenty elementary schools participating in the program.

4. Liaisons will implement data collection activities (observation, interview, questionnaire distribution) at their schools to be used in the assessment of each school's characteristics, practices, and particular areas of concern.

5. The data collected at each school will be analyzed by the School Improvement staff with the assistance of the Office of Educational Evaluation (OEE).

6. Based on the school analyses, the various improvement strategies will be modified and augmented as necessary. Strategies will emphasize the advisory and supportive role that the School Improvement Project will play in bringing about instructional and administrative improvement in participating schools.

7. School Improvement Liaisons will be trained in the advisory role they will play in assisting their assigned school in

the development of an improvement plan which will act to fully utilize the school's strengths and address its concerns. The School Liaison will act in a supportive capacity to the principal in the planning and implementation of school improvement activities. Thus far among the activities to be included in the school improvement plans are:

- The identification and coordination of a more effective allocation of the instructional, administrative, financial and personnel resources present within the school.
- The identification and engagement of additional instructional and advisory resources available from the Central Administration of the Board of Education and the State Education Department.
- Utilization of the diagnostic testing program which will enable teachers to assess the instructional needs of individual pupils in math and reading.

8. The School Improvement Liaisons, in addition to providing advisory expertise and serving as the contact person in the identification and delivery of Central Administration and State Education Department resources, will document improvement activities at their assigned schools. Liaisons will be trained in the participant/observer role which they will play in aiding program planning, implementation, and operation at their assigned schools.

9. The findings of the school needs assessment will be presented initially to the school staff and then to parents by the principal, with the assistance of the assigned School Liaisons at each of the participating schools. The presentation will be followed by a description of the alternative improvement strategies the school might adopt to establish or augment more effective practices at their school. It will be stressed that the intention of the School Improvement Project is <u>not</u> to allocate additional funds to the school building. The purpose of the program <u>is</u> to assist the school in realizing its own improvement through such activities as the redirection of existing school resources and the engagement of Central Board, State Education Department, and other resources and expertise as necessary and available.

10. The School Improvement Committee chaired by by the school principal, and including special program supervisors, representatives of the teaching staff from each grade level, the U.F.T. Chapter Chairperson, parent representatives and the assigned School Improvement Liaisons will be formed at each participating school. The responsibility of the committee will be to formulate a plan for school improvement based on the assessed needs of the school.

11. The School Improvement Committe in each of the participating public schools will meet on a regular basis to work on the formulation of their improvement plan. They will report to the staff at the monthly conference as well as through minutes, newsletters, or other means.

12. Upon the completion of the initial improvement plan, the School Improvement Committee will present the proposed plan to the school's staff and parents, and then to the community school board and the district superintendent for review and comments.

13. Each school improvement plan will also be presented to the advisory review panel for examination and recommendations. The School Improvement Committees will judge whether or not to incorporate the recommendations into their improvement plans.

14. The final written improvement plan will be approved by the principal and the School Improvement Committee.

15. Each School Improvement Committee will supervise the implementation of their improvement plan. School Liaisons will maintain an ongoing record of the plan's implementation. This record will document the development and operation of each plan as well as provide the committee with the feedback necessary to revise or modify improvement strategies and activities.

16. At the weekly School Improvement Committee meetings in each school, committee members will share and discuss the Liaison's observations as well as developments relevant to the implementation of the school's particular improvement plan or the School Improvement Project in general.

17. Weekly meetings of the entire School Improvement Project staff will be scheduled to share reports and information regarding implementation of improvement plans at each of the schools. Liaisons may report the contents of these meetings to their assigned schools at School Improvement Committee meetings.

18. Near the end of the school year Liaisons will readminister the school assessment and data collection instruments to evaluate the current state of school characteristics and practices at their assigned schools. Liaisons will also conduct a survey of school staff and parent opinion regarding the School Improvement Project.

19. The Office of Educational Evaluation will use the school assessment data, the needs assessment, and the Liaisons' ongoing records to evaluate the initial effectiveness of the improvement plans implemented by each of the schools. Individual diagnostic and achievement test results in math and reading will be collected to record baseline pupil performance to be compared with future performance following school participation in the School Improvement Project over the next two years.

20. The Office of Educational Evaluation will also conduct a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of improvement plans across project sites. This will include an assessment of the Project's ability to provide services which effectively dealt with particular needs outlined in improvement plans. A final evaluation report will be prepared for the review and approval of the Chancellor.

21. The School Improvement Project staff will present a report toward the end of the school year to each school assessing the initial impact of the program in general and on the school specifically

22. The advisory review panel will comment on all year-end reports prepared by the School Improvement Project. Reports presented to the panel will maintain school anonymity.

23. A meeting will be held with School Improvement staff, school staff, and parents at each school to discuss Project progress and the continued participation of the school in the Project for the coming year.

VII. Management

The governors of the School Improvement Project are Ronald Edmonds (Senior Assistant to the Chancellor for Instruction), Alan Blumner (Director, Acting, Office of Educational Evaluation), and Paul A. Loughran (Chief Administrator, Acting).

Staff

Staff of the School Improvement Project will total 11 Liaisons Cycle I (Fall 1979) and approximately 21 during Cycle II (January 1980).

Major responsibilities of these staff positions will be the following:

(1) Chief Administrator
- -Program conceptualization
- -Oversees all planning, implementation and coordination of program activities.
- -Meets with the principal investigators to discuss program objectives and activities, staffing requirements, time frames for completion of major phases of the program, report format, etc.

(1) Deputy Administrator
- -Assists Chief Administrator in the overall administration of the program.
- -Supervises the activities of professional and administrative staff.
- -Meets with Chief Administrator and the governors to discuss recommendations concerning program implementation.

(1) Project Manager
- -Assists Deputy Administrator in the implementation of program activities in participating schools.
- -Coordinates the management of all instructional support and advisory services to schools.
- -Supervises activities of the School Improvement Liaisons in participating schools.

(1) Senior Evaluation Specialist
-Develops research methods, procedures, techniques, and instruments for use in the School Improvement Project.
-Designs instruments for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Project activities.

(1) Resource Specialist
-Identifies and coordinates special resource allocations to schools from central, district, community, state, federal, city, business, university, and non-profit sources.

(21) School Improvement Liaison (11 hired during Cycle I; 10 more to be hired in January 1980)
(Assigned to a school 4 to 5 days per week and to central headquarters 1 day per two weeks, as program needs dictate).
-Data collection at assigned schools.
-Represents program at parents and school staff meetings at assigned school.
-Assists school in planning, implementation, and coordination of school improvement strategies.
-Monitors implementation of school improvement strategies.

(1) Office Analyst
-Office management and systems
-Administrative consultant to participating schools concerning paper flow, school office management, and reporting systems.

(2) Office Associates
-Office stenography
-General secretarial duties

(2) Office Aides
-Typing
-Filing

VIII Evaluation

An independent advisory committee will act in a consultative capacity to suggest modifications and revisions of Project policy and implementation strategies. This committee will include, but not be limited to, representatives of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, Economic Development Council, Elementary School Principals Association, New York City Association of Superintendents, New York City School Boards Association, Public Education Association, United Federation of Teachers, and United Parents Association.

The annual School Improvement Project evaluation, conducted by the Documentation Unit of the Office of Educational Evaluation, will include:

(1) an analysis of pre and post school assessment data;
(2) an analysis of pre and post basic skills achievement data;
(3) an analysis of local school improvement planning activities at all sites;
(4) survey of administrative, staff, and parental assessment of the Project's activities.

Frank J. Macchiarola
Chancellor of Schools

Ronald R. Edmonds
Senior Assistant to the
Chancellor for Instruction

Paul A. Loughran
Chief Administrator (Acting)
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(212) 964-2307

November, 1979

Dear Colleague:

The enclosed document, the School Improvement Project Case Study Phase, is a revised version of the original technical Case Study Report that was an analysis of the data gathered during the Case Study phase of the Project, conducted in the Spring of 1979. This document is a less technical report that offers a narrative description of the activities conducted and provides a non-technical reporting of the Project findings.

The Case Study Phase has been prepared for general dissemination to interested groups among our various constituencies in New York City as well as to educators throughout the country and the public sector at large. It is hoped that the information that is being shared will increase the public's awareness and understanding of the goals, objectives, and activities of the School Improvement Project.

If you have any questions or wish further information about the Project, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Paul A. Loughran

Paul A. Loughran, Ph.D.
Chief Administrator (Acting)

PAL:dlk

The School Improvement Project acknowledges the outstanding efforts of the many individuals involved with the original Case Study Report and this subsequent document, covering the case study phase of the Project. The future impact of the Project has been facilitated by the sharing of information and insights with School Improvement Staff by District Superintendents, principals, teachers, and school staff and parents in nine New York City Elementary Schools.

Dr. Paul A. Loughran's outstanding leadership and administrative skills as the Chief Administrator (Acting) of the School Improvement Project were in evidence as he took full charge of and responsibility for all the Project activities necessary to insure its smooth implementation. The theoretical foundation, conceptualization and ongoing support for this field research were provided by the Senior Assistant to the Chancellor for Instruction, Mr. Ronald Edmonds. Dr. Alan S. Blumner, Director (Acting) of the Office of Educational Evaluation, supervised the overall programmatic procedures, consulted on preliminary technical and proposal-related items, and met with the Case Study Methodologists. Dr. Dennis McCarthy, Director of the Documentation Unit, School Improvement Project, gave invaluable assistance by developing the research design, refining the data-gathering instruments, assisting in the selection of the case study schools, and training the Case Study Methodologists.

A special note of thanks goes to the five Case Study Methodologists, whose knowledge and skills in the areas of field research, interpersonal communication, and pedagogy enhanced the Case Studies. The Case Study Methodologists were: Ms. Dawn Dorsey, Dr. Robert Fredericks, Mr. Henry Iori, Dr. Jacqueline Peek-Davis, and Ms. Barbara Spriggs.

A consultant to the Project, Ms. Elaine Adler of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, adapted the original, technical Case Study Report to produce this document for general dissemination to our various constituencies. We are grateful for the thorough, professional job that she has done.

Thanks also are extended to Ms. Doris Kaplan and Ms. Richia Smith for the typing and clerical assistance they provided in preparation of the nine case studies and the 1979 School Improvement Project Case Study Phase.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: THE CASE STUDY PHASE

BACKGROUND: RESEARCH INTO SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Research into school effectiveness falls generally into two categories: one category linking academic outcomes to student characteristics such as income level and ethnicity, and another body of research viewing school characteristics as principal determinants of student achievement. While the first group of studies places primary responsibility for student achievement on pupils and their parents, the second holds schools and their staffs accountable for instructional outcomes.

The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey (EEOS) by James Coleman describes the association between academic achievement and students and their families, concluding that "...schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context (Coleman, 1966:325)." Short of altering a child's family background to fit the profile of academic success, the Coleman Report does not offer useful strategies for improving pupil achievement.

It is not possible to change a child's family background; this fact, coupled with the existence of schools that are successful regardless of student characteristics,has led many researchers to explore other factors which might be related to school effectiveness, especially for minority and poor children. Such studies typically begin by examining urban schools which are "effective" (i.e., where students' basic skills achievement test scores have risen over a period of time) and then compare them to "ineffective" schools (i.e., where similar test scores have declined over the same time period) with analogous student populations. When effective schools are found to exist alongside ineffective ones, after student characteristics have been controlled for, researchers have concluded that differences in

pupil achievement cannot be explained away by students' family background, but rather reside in the nature of the schools themselves.

Gradually, researchers have come to identify those school characteristics which seem to affect student achievement (Brookover and Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1977; State of New York, 1974; Madden, et al, 1976; Rutter, et al, 1979; Weber, 1971). In general, the effective schools seem to share certain characteristics which are not uniformly present in ineffective schools. These include strong leadership, with a mix of both management and instructional skills, and a plan for dealing with reading and math achievement problems; an atmosphere conducive to learning; expectations by teachers and principals that students can master basic skills; an emphasis on basic skills instruction, with clearly stated goals and learning objectives; and continuous monitoring of students' achievement.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: BASIC PREMISES

The School Improvement Project (SIP) is based in part on the findings of an ongoing research study entitled "Search for Effective Schools" (Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1977) being conducted in the elementary schools of Lansing and Detroit, Michigan.

Mr. Edmonds, presently Senior Assistant to the Chancellor for Instruction at the New York City Board of Education, has summarized the characteristics of effective urban schools as follows:

> [Effective schools] have strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can be neither brought together nor kept together. Schools that are instructionally effective for poor children have a climate of expectation in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum but efficacious levels of achievement. -The school's atmosphere is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand. Effective schools get that way partly by making it clear that pupil acquisition of basic skills takes precedence over all other school activities...The final effective school characteristic is that there must be some means by which pupil progress can be monitored (Edmonds, 1978).

CURRENT DATA: THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

Many New York City Public Schools also demonstrate marked success in basic skills instruction as measured by student performance on achievement tests. Nevertheless, other schools with similar student populations do not meet this standard. Examination of the 1978 Board of Education data, which summarizes basic skills achievement for all the City's elementary school pupils, is not encouraging. Some 21.5% of all sixth graders tested are reading two or more years below grade level. As these students move on to junior high schools and high schools, they fall even further behind, often dropping out of school altogether, or becoming non-diploma graduates. The gravity of this problem led to the development of the School Improvement Project, a commitment to improve student achievement in the area of basic skills.

GOALS: THE SCHOOL FACTORS

The goal of the School Improvement Project (SIP) is to help participating schools improve their instructional effectiveness through development of those educational practices and conditions believed to be most conducive to successful education. Based on the work of Mr. Edmonds and other educational researchers, the School Improvement Project has identified five factors which have been shown to be major determinants of school effectiveness.

These are:
1. Strong administrative leadership
2. School climate conducive to learning.
3. School-wide emphasis on basic skills instruction.
4. Optimistic teacher expectations of pupil ability.
5. Ongoing assessment of pupil progress.

In order to examine the relationship between these factors and New York City school outcomes, case studies were carried out in nine of the City's elementary schools.

PURPOSES OF THE CASE STUDY PHASE OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Case Study Phase was, in essence, a developmental probe for the larger school improvement effort scheduled to begin in September, 1979. The primary purposes of this phase of the Project were to test the applicability of the school factors as determinants of academic outcomes in New York City schools; to evaluate data collection instruments; to establish a group of "veteran" school liaisons who could train new liaisons entering the schools during the 1979-80 academic year; and to help SIP staff develop strategies for school improvement based on first-hand experience in schools.

SELECTION OF STAFF

Eight professionals comprised the staff for the case studies. These included an Acting Project Administrator to direct activities, five case study liaisons to work in schools, and a consultant and an evaluator/methodologist to provide technical assistance with the overall project design and case study methodology. The Acting Project Administrator was selected in January, 1979. In February, the Project Administrator hired five case study liaisons based on their knowledge of the New York City schools, background in social science research methodology, and prior school experience.

Liaisons were trained by the Project Administrator, the consultant, and the evaluator/methodologist, who explained the hypothesized relationship between the school factors and academic outcomes in New York City, as well as the case study method to be employed during this phase of the Project. After an initial training period, liaisons assisted in developing operational definitions for each of the five factors to be measured in the case study schools. Once assigned to their schools, liaisons collected, analyzed, and interpreted data on the factors over two five-week periods. Each

spent approximately four days per week in the schools, and one day per week at SIP headquarters.

SELECTION OF SCHOOLS

A major purpose of the Case Study Phase was to test the applicability of the school factors as determinants of student achievement in New York City schools. In order to study the relationship between student outcomes and school characteristics, however, school effectiveness also needed to be defined operationally.

For approximately a decade, the Board of Education has administered a city-wide reading achievement test in the public schools. The results of these tests are used to compile annual, rank-ordered lists of all the City's elementary schools, according to students' test results. Although these lists describe school achievement based on reading alone, the inclusion of each of the City's elementary schools, plus the longitudinal nature of the rankings, made them the best available indicator of overall school effectiveness.

Once the city-wide rankings had been selected as a measure of school effectiveness, a numerical definition which would differentiate highly effective schools from less effective ones was needed. Schools which demonstrated substantial upward movement (100 places or more) in the rankings over the previous four years were categorized "improvers". Those which over the same time period demonstrated no substantial movement (fewer than 20 places in either direction) or substantial downward movement (20 or more places) were categorized "maintaining/declining" schools.

Next, pairs of "improving" and "maintaining/declining" schools from each community school district were examined as possible candidates for case study. To ensure that the observed differences in pupil achievement could be attributable to school characteristics, rather than cultural or economic differences among students, the two schools selected in each

district were matched in terms of school size, student ethnicity, AFDC incidence, and percent low-income pupils. An attempt was also made to select schools which would be broadly representative of the various economic and racial groups which comprise the New York City Public School population.

From among the candidate schools, a pair of improving and maintaining/declining schools with analogous pupil populations were chosen in five districts. Meetings were held with District Superintendents to discuss the accuracy of the choices and to learn of any unusual circumstances which might have accounted for the observed changes in pupil performance over the previous four years. Generally, Superintendents agreed with the selections.

Following meetings with school principals in which they stated their willingness to participate, each case study liaison was assigned to a school to conduct the investigation. The case studies were conducted over two five-week periods--five case studies per five-week period. During the second investigation period, one school withdrew from the study, leaving a total of four improving schools and five maintainer/decliners. The table below describes the pupil populations of the nine case study schools.

TABLE 1

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

	Improving Schools (N=4)	Maintaining/Declining Schools (N=5)
Average Student Register	590	640
% Low Income	45.4	50.1
% Black	35.6	39.0
% Hispanic	37.6	41.3
% Other	26.8	19.8
Average number of Movements in city rankings	+148.8	-63.6

DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the anecdotal information and personal observations recorded by the case study liaisons in the form of daily field notes, several other formal data collection instruments were utilized. Teacher Questionnaires measured teachers' opinions regarding the presence in their schools of each of the five factors described previously (administrative style, instructional emphasis on basic skills, school climate, teacher expectations, and ongoing assessment of pupil progress). Directions for completing the questionnaires were explained by case study liaisons, who also assured teachers that all replies would remain strictly confidential.

The questionnaire asked each teacher respondent to indicate whether specific items relating to each of the five factors were "definitely", "generally", "usually not", or "definitely not" characteristic of their schools. Administrative style was assessed through 18 items concerning the amount of communication, staff interaction, and administrative support teachers reported to be present in their schools, as well as the existence of a written school-wide philosophy and adequate provision of materials. Thirteen items dealing with academic objectives, subject matter, and instructional patterns and methodology measured the instructional emphasis factor. School climate was ascertained through nine items concerning staff morale, students' attitudes, building maintenance, and school-wide discipline, security, and safety policies. The expectations factor was gauged through six questions regarding teachers' attitudes towards students. Ongoing assessment of pupil progress was measured by five items related to testing, use of achievement and diagnostic test results, and individualization of instruction.*

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*Since several items on the questionnaire were related to more than one factor, in some cases the same item is included under two separate factor headings.

In addition to the questionnaire liaisons conducted interviews (lasting from 25 to 90 minutes) with school staff to gather corroborative data. The Case Study Interview Form was designed to measure administrators', teachers', auxiliary staff members', and parents' views on each of the five factors. Interviewees were assured that all information recorded would remain confidential. As the purpose of the interviews was to corroborate questionnaire results, interview questions corresponded generally to the items on the Teacher Questionnaires. In addition to corroborative data, however, the interviews also yielded information which could not be obtained within the scope of the questionnaires.

FINDINGS

A total of 224, or 82%, of the teachers in the case study schools completed questionnaires, and 240, or 87.9%, provided corroborative data through voluntary interviews. Seventeen, or 94.1%, of case study school administrators were also interviewed, as were 37 auxiliary staff members and 16 parents. The results of these data collection activities are presented below.

1. Teacher Questionnaires

Table 2 summarizes the results of the Teacher Questionnaires administered in all the case study schools. The percentages show the proportion of teachers from both types of schools who indicated that a particular factor, as measured by the various questions pertaining to each, was "definitely" or "definitely not" characteristic of their schools. Appendix I contains a complete breakdown, including "generally" and "usually not"

responses as well*.

The percentages were calculated in the following manner: First, case study liaisons separated questionnaire items according to the factor to which each pertained. Then, for each item within a factor, liaisons calculated four totals. The first representing the number of respondents in the school who answered "definitely" for that particular item; the second showed the number of respondents in the school who answered "generally", and so on. Then the total number of "definitely", "generally", "usually not", and "definitely not" responses for all items within each factor were calculated for each school. Using this method, frequency distributions by factor, called "factor scores", were obtained in each case study school.

Factor scores were also expressed as percentages, yielding a school-by-school profile of responses for each of the five factors. Final percentages were obtained by grouping school profiles into two categories, improving and maintaining/declining, then averaging each group's results separately (See Table II).

2. Corroborative Data

The additional data collection activities corroborated questionnaire results. Anecdotal records of the liaisons' personal observations in their schools, as well as interviews with administrators, teachers, auxiliary staff, and parents generally supported the data on the five

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*As demonstrated in Appendix I, the "generally" response category did not discriminate well between improving and maintaining/declining schools and therefore, will not be discussed. This response category should have been labeled "usually". Based on the substantial and consistent direction of differences between the two types of schools in the other response categories on all five factors, it is possible that the selection of the "generally" category may have allowed respondents (particularly in maintaining/declining schools) to hedge or be non-committal in answering particular items. While the "usually not" category showed dramatic differences between the two types of schools, to maintain consistency in presenting results only the "definitely" and "definitely not" categories will be discussed in detail.

TABLE II

Summary of Teacher Questionnaire Results*

(in percent)

Responses	Factors: Administrative Style	Instructional Emphasis	School Climate	Teacher Expectations	Ongoing Assessment of Pupil Progress
1. "Definitely"					
-Improving Schools	41.2	55.8	45.2	56.7	40.0
-Maintaining/ Declining Schools	25.4	45.3	29.2	34.8	27.8
2. "Definitely not"					
-Improving Schools	3.9	2.4	2.8	1.0	1.8
-Maintaining/ Declining Schools	12.1	4.3	11.1	6.5	7.3

*Number of questionnaires completed in improving schools: 109
Number of questionnaires completed in maintaining/declining schools: 115
Total Number of questionnaires completed: 224

factors obtained through Teacher Questionnaires. While the informal nature of these activities made a rigorous factor-by-factor analysis such as that performed on the questionnaire results unfeasible, both, nevertheless, provided valuable insights into each case study school's strengths and weaknesses, as discussed below.

DISCUSSION

This section analyzes the results of the data collection activities described above. Individual case study reports present separate analyses of the data collected in each school, including questionnaire results, liaisons' daily logs, as well as detailed accounts of the interviews conducted.

1. Overview

As evident from Table II, the five factors are more characteristic of improving schools than of maintaining/declining schools. Similarly, maintaining/declining school teachers reported each of the factors to be "definitely not" characteristic of their schools more often than did staff in improving schools. By combining questionnaire results with data from interviews and liaisons' daily observations, a more precise characterization of both types of schools emerges.

2. The Five Factors

a. Administrative Style

Ninety to one hundred percent of improving school teachers reported that their schools had a written philosophy reflecting school-wide educational goals. A similar proportion of teachers in improving schools reported effective within-grade and school-wide instructional coordination, regular administrative response to teachers' difficulties, useful faculty meetings, formal provisions for staff

interaction on curriculum matters, and adequate inservice training in their schools.

Maintaining/declining school teachers, on the other hand, indicated a lack of instructional supervision by administrators and general dissatisfaction with instructional goals in their schools. In addition, 50-82% of teachers in maintaining/declining schools found in-service training, teacher involvement in curriculum development, within-and between-grade coordination of instruction, and instructional materials to be inadequate in their schools.

b. Instructional Emphasis on Basic Skills

Ninety to one hundred percent of teachers in improving schools reportedly emphasize small group as well as individualized instruction in basic skills, prepare written daily lesson plans, and encourage student participation in basic skills instruction.

c. School Climate

The vast majority of teachers in improving schools reported effective communication between teachers and principals, a well-defined policy on discipline and school safety procedures, and an orderly atmosphere in their schools. Interviews with maintaining/declining school teachers indicated fairly high morale among teachers but dissatisfaction with their schools' discipline, security, and safety procedures, and a high degree of concern regarding disciplinary problems and teacher-principal communication.

d. Teacher Expectations

Nearly all teachers in improving schools expressed high levels of interest in their pupils and their belief that all pupils can learn. In general, maintaining/declining school teachers also felt that

all pupils can learn but listed high pupil mobility rates and lack of parental support as the primary sources of academic difficulty among students.

e. Ongoing Assessment of Pupil Progress

Improving school teachers reportedly use achievement and diagnostic test results regularly in monitoring students' progress and in writing daily lesson plans. Interviews with teachers from declining/maintaining schools, however, revealed considerable reliance on informal evaluations and teacher-made tests in assessing their students' achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Case Study Phase achieved its intended objectives. Teacher Questionnaires appeared to provide accurate information regarding the presence of the five factors in the schools studied. The close agreement of questionnaire data with information gathered through interviews and informal observations further confirmed the effectiveness of the data collection instruments devised for the case studies. In addition, the first-hand experience in schools gained by case study liaisons will enable them to assist in training new school liaisons scheduled to enter the schools in the fall of this academic year. Finally, the identification of specific items contributing to the presence or absence of each of the five factors has led to the development of strategies for school improvement to be applied during the larger school improvement effort.

In addition to meeting these goals, the Case Study Phase also led to

the following conclusions regarding the applicability of the five factors as determinants of academic outcomes in New York City Schools:

1. The responses of teachers, administrators, auxiliary staff members, and parents suggest that the five factors are more characteristic of improving schools than of declining/maintaining schools.

2. Since the five factors seem more characteristic of schools in which student reading achievement has improved, and less characteristic of those in which student reading achievement has worsened, the factors appear to be positively associated with academic outcomes in the schools studied.

3. Since the case study schools were broadly representative of all the New York City Public Schools, a similar association should exist between the five factors and other City schools not yet examined.

4. Since the five factors are <u>school</u> characteristics which can be manipulated (as opposed to <u>student</u> characteristics, which cannot), increasing the degree to which the factors are present in New York City schools should lead to increased academic outcomes among New York City pupils.

APPENDIX I

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS
(in percent)

FACTORS*	IMPROVING SCHOOLS (N=4)	MAINTAINING/DECLINING SCHOOLS (N=5)
Administrative Style		
Definitely	41.2	25.4
Generally	43.4	42.3
Unsually Not	10.3	19.6
Definitely Not	3.9	12.1
Instructional Emphasis on Basic Skills		
Definitely	55.8	45.3
Generally	35.0	38.8
Usually Not	5.3	11.0
Definitely Not	2.4	4.3
School Climate		
Definitely	45.2	29.2
Generally	42.9	40.3
Usually Not	7.9	19.4
Definitely Not	2.8	11.1
Teacher Expectations		
Definitely	56.7	34.8
Generally	37.1	42.6
Usually Not	4.9	14.3
Definitely Not	1.0	6.5
Ongoing Assessment of Pupil Progress		
Definitely	40.0	27.8
Generally	46.8	42.7
Usually Not	8.8	21.5
Definitely Not	1.8	7.3
Number of questionnaires completed:	109	115

*Sets of response for each factor may not equal 100% due to incomplete questionnaire returns, rounding errors, or both.

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